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REVIEWS

*Child of the Amazons*, by Max Eastman. Mitchell Kennerley.

In the initial poem of this book, Mr. Max Eastman presents, under the thin veil of a classic myth, a problem essentially modern; modern, that is, in the peculiar emphasis placed upon it by the majority of people who write about such subjects today.

Thyone, one of the younger Amazons, has fallen in love with a neighboring king, and, before the Queen of the Amazons and a council of her warriors, pleads to be allowed to relinquish war and indulge the milder passion. She spends a night thinking it over, however, and informs us of the error of her first impulse in the following nobly explanatory lines:

Oh I love to live!  
The task and the adventure, toil and rest,  
And mirth and the hot news of accident!  
I love to live, impetuous, for joy  
And woe, a life of action unto God!  
Triumphantly I choose it! I renounce  
My wish of love, my hope, my fruitful years!  
For who would be the consort of a king,  
Subduer of the earth, and be subdued?  
Who would bring into this heroic world  
A child, before she had gone forth to prove  
That she herself was equal to the world?

This is the kind of sentiment that passes with many as the most advanced modern thought. "Before she had gone forth"—where? "To prove that she herself was equal to the world"—how? By retrèating from it? It seems to be a part of certain modern socialist

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

propaganda to regard love as apart from life; as not in itself, perhaps, the one great conflict of life, and one not subject to conquest by negation. It is, rather, extremely doubtful if one may come to any fitting terms with life without first facing the conflict of love through experience. The world is, after all, not outside us, but within us.

But this is a question of personal philosophy, rather than of poetry. Other poems in the volume achieve a more definite poetic impression than this one, in which the reiterative iamb is awkwardly insistent. Notably three shorter poems—*At the Aquarium*, *In March*, and *Diogenes*; if it were not for these the general impression would be disappointing, especially as Mr. Eastman's recent book, *The Enjoyment of Poetry*, had led one to expect so much. In this he gave us a singularly concise and intimate analysis of the psychological basis of poetry; it was, in fact, a definite contribution to the subject. But the poems of Mr. Eastman fail just because of his analytical attitude; the emotion is not direct, but deflected. He has written *about* the emotion; he has not presented it. Is it a fault of temperament? Is he appreciative rather than creative? Or is it a failure in adjusting, in focusing, in concentrating deliberately upon the poetic medium? Mr. Eastman knows well enough how to single out the words that give a sense of life. We wish that he would give us more of them in his poetry. *At the Aquarium*, and several of the other short poems

*Reviews*

in the volume are worth innumerable children of Amazons and still-born apostrophes of heroes. We quote *At the Aquarium*:

Serene the silver fishes glide,  
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!  
As through the aged deeps of ocean,  
They glide with wan and wavy motion!  
They have no pathway where they go,  
They flow like water to and fro.  
They watch with never-winking eyes.  
They watch with staring, cold surprise,  
The level people in the air,  
The people peering, peering there,  
Who wander also to and fro,  
And know not why or where they go,  
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,  
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

*A. C. H.*

*Poems and Songs* (second series), by Richard Middleton.

Fisher Unwin.

These are the poems of a distinguished amateur who is nearly always a poet. And as amateurishness is the note of the time in contemporary England, it may be well contended that he expresses his decade. And surely few will reproach him that he cared little for the steely perfections of art, seeing that there is in his work so much that is sympathetic, so much that is human, and so much pathos that is in no way egotistic.

He wrote many poems that will not serve as models, but scarcely one without some touch of beauty that was distinctly his own, and interpreted by his own emotions.

His poetry is primarily poetry of the emotions, and intended for readers rather than for the cold senate of